

A LUCKY BLACK GROUSE.

HOW A RUSSIAN EXILE SECURED MUCH VALUED PRIVILEGES.

Present to the Wife of a Hard Hearted Official Was His Favor—Leaves from the Reminiscences of Count Alex. Norokov.

(Special Correspondence.)

NEW YORK, Oct. 10.—It was in the year 1871 that the minister of interior sent orders to the governor of the province of Archangel, which he in turn communicated to the ispravnik (chief of police) to have me turned under guard to Petersburg, there to await the further disposition of my case. I was to journey to the capital city in the company of a number of exiles, who, having served out their terms in the prisons of the province, were to be sent to help colonize Siberia. It was a rather roundabout way in which to reach their destination, but they were forced to proceed in this way from the fact that at that time no steamships existed along what would be their line of march across the northern part of the Russian possessions.



THE REBEL SAVED HIM.

Thus, to reach Siberia they were compelled to return to Petersburg and take up their journey from that place. The exiles travel slowly, never more than twenty-five versts being passed in one day, and every fourth day is devoted entirely to rest. It is only at every fourth station that an escape officer is found, and these are the testing places. At the other stations the gentlemen who accompany the exiles become weary of this slow, monotonous way of traveling, and the prisons where we were forced to sleep were such foul smelling, ill-ventilated places that I felt I would soon fall ill if I continued to occupy them.

The prisoners are chained but once a year, and the accumulation of filth and vermin found in them is simply appalling. The walls and floor are damp and altogether unfit for human habitation. My only hope in bettering my condition lay in finding some means of separating from the exiles. This I could only do by feigning sickness and letting the others proceed without me. Twenty-four hours after their departure I found me convalescent and ready to resume my journey. As a man of rank by law I was entitled to the privilege of one horse, and by the kindness of the escape officer I was enabled to obtain a second horse for the use of the gentleman who accompanied me. Thus equipped, I had no difficulty in overtaking the party on foot, in addition to passing three escape stations in twenty-four hours. At the last of these I decided to spend the night, as I was becoming exhausted from hard riding. When about to resume my journey in the morning I was informed by the escape officer that I would find much difficulty in passing the official at my next halting place, without experiencing considerable delay, as he would in all probability detain me during my short stay under his roof. He had shown me every kindness, and no doubt told me what he did to put me on my guard and prepare me somewhat for the reception I was likely to meet. I was within fifteen versts of the prison over which Ivan Dmitrievich Durakoff exercised such absolute control, and while busy with my thoughts as how best to approach the old tyrant, a peasant suddenly appeared in the road, carrying in his hands a live black grouse. It flashed across my mind that it would be a good idea to secure the bird as a present to the old soldier's wife. I thought such a gift might soften the old officer's heart, for it is seldom that a black grouse is caught alive, and is therefore regarded as a curiosity. Stepping the black grouse inquired how much he would take for the bird. "Only fifteen kopecks, your honor," was the reply. So the hawk got his fifteen kopecks and I the bird.

Fortune favored me, for on reaching the station the much dreaded official was absent, and my first meeting was with his wife, into whose good graces I ingratiated myself by presenting her with the black grouse. I told her she should keep it in remembrance of a prisoner's visit to her home. I then explained to her the situation of affairs, and also related in detail my fear of being locked up by her cruel husband and the endless trouble such delay would cause me, as I was in a great hurry to reach Petersburg as quickly as possible. Mrs. Anna Durakoff was a stout, middle-aged woman dressed in a very old-fashioned, but comfortable long hair. She laughed at my fears and assured that no such direful calamity as I predicted would befall me.

She replied: "You shall have three good horses for the next thirty versts; the only use I shall make of my power will be to have you arrested under dinner is ready. I am brooding next spring dinner, and we have plenty of milk, vegetables and butter. You surely can desire nothing better, and after you have had a good meal you can proceed on your journey. My husband is not at all the bad man people represent him to be. It is true he is strict in the discharge of duty, but withal kind hearted and generous to a fault, and I can never harm at his hands. Will you please, seated while I attend to the dinner?" and with a smile and a soft "excuse me," she departed.

The room in which I was seated, gave evidence of considerable taste in the furnishing, notwithstanding that everything in it was old-fashioned. The walls were adorned with old family portraits, while at one side of the room an ancient piano formed the chief attraction. I was not in the least usual to carpet the floors, rugs being employed instead, but in this case the floor was simply painted, and as clean as soap and water could make it. While waiting, Madame's only child appeared on the scene, carrying in her arms the bird which I had just presented her mother.

The daughter, Elena, was a pretty, interesting girl of perhaps 14 years. She was very much pleased with the black grouse, calling it may mine (my love) and in every way exhibiting her pleasure and the unexpected gift. I had been seated about fifteen minutes when the door suddenly opened and Officer Durakoff entered. His appearance was sufficiently fierce to make the stoutest heart

quail. He was a tall, powerful man, who wore his hair very thickly. His mustache, iron gray, was heavy and fierce looking. Added to this he had dark, piercing eyes, which seemed to search the depths of your inmost soul. He was dressed in a full captain's uniform, which well became his tall, handsome form. Such was Van Dmitrievich Durakoff, the man I so much feared and of whom I had heard such frightful things.

His appearance did not at all reassure me, and I believed him capable of all he had been accused of. He met me in a very cool, dignified manner. I explained my position to him, and begged that he would cause me no delay, but permit me to continue my journey as I had been doing. I told him I had some money with me sufficient to pay for another horse. I told him, as I had his wife, that it was absolutely necessary for me to be in Petersburg at the earliest possible moment. I had scarcely finished speaking when he shouted, in a voice of thunder: "Oh, no; that is against the law. You will have to remain here until your party arrives, which will become days yet."

At this juncture the black grouse entered slowly from another room, seemingly as if aware of my danger, and, if possible, to assist me. Looking at the bird in astonishment, Durakoff exclaimed: "What is that?" I explained that I brought it a present to his wife. "Oh!" he said, taking my hand and shaking it, "my wife is so fond of birds, and she has never before had a live one. A thousand rubles could not make her as happy as the presentation of this bird." Durakoff's whole manner had changed; so there was, after all, a soft side to his character. This man, so cruel to others, had at least a tender regard for the partner of his joys. With a smile he turned to me and said: "I think I can arrange everything in a satisfactory manner for your departure. I will see that you have fresh horses and all you require until you reach your next resting place."

He then ordered cigars and vodka to be brought, with the remark that he kept none but the best liquors. The daughter came bearing the refreshments, and at the same time to look after the bird. At my request she sat herself at the piano and played and sang some Russian songs. The bird, surprised at the unusual sound, remained perfectly motionless for some minutes, its attitude suggestive of listening, which gave it a very wise look and caused much amusement. Dinner was soon served; it was good, and being hungry I did ample justice to the tempting viands. I washed down by copious draughts of vodka. Indeed, I had much vodka did mine host force upon me that I soon found myself in scarcely a fit condition to continue my journey. When ready to start I caused the officer's wife much merriment by my clumsiness in getting into the tarantula.

On parting with Officer Durakoff he handed me a letter to the next escape officer, and in this wise I passed from station to station. The presentation of the black grouse saved me forty days on my journey and the discomfort of escape prison travel. When crossing Lake Ladoga I fell in with some of my

the next morning. The first sight that greeted my waking eyes were the two hangmen (palatch) working in the prison yard. They were both large, powerful men, dressed in the customary red shirt. One of them, Maximoff, had murdered his mother, and was sentenced to hard labor for life. The other, Sidoroff, had murdered his aged father, and had likewise received a life sentence. Both men on being admitted to prison declared their wish to become hangmen.

Their request was granted, and they are apparently happy in pursuit of their ghastly occupation. They have good food, and are allowed cigarettes and three glasses of vodka daily. They also have the privilege of smoking tobacco and cigarettes to the other prisoners, making a profit of 200 per cent. in their transactions. When the gentleman entered my cell I demanded to know the reason of my being placed in such a filthy place. He replied: "The governor was displeased at your manner of speaking, and ordered you here for punishment. I tell you, however, that I demand that you send for Prince Suvaroff, the governor general; that I have a very important state secret to communicate, one which I must tell to him and him alone."

In a few minutes the governor (brute of the previous evening) appeared at my cell door and, smiling blandly, said: "What is this state secret you wish to communicate? Make me your confidant, and I will see that you receive a good reward; you will also receive a large reward." I answered: "To Prince Suvaroff will I communicate my secret, and to him alone, and it is necessary that I see him at once." The governor remained quite half an hour, endeavoring to persuade me to communicate my knowledge to him. I was proof against all his wiles. He then said: "But you can not receive the prince in this place. I will have you removed to a better cell. But I resolutely refused to change my quarters until I had seen the governor general. No amount of persuasion could alter my determination.

Prince Suvaroff was sent for, came to my cell and was much surprised to find an old acquaintance and such a formidable man. He was much surprised to find a state secret to communicate, but I did have a serious complaint to make against the governor of the prison. The prince, after severely reprimanding the prison officials, ordered that I be immediately conveyed to the department for politicals. It was on the third floor of the prison and possessed at least a few comforts, and I was much surprised to find a state secret to communicate, but I did have a serious complaint to make against the governor of the prison. The prince, after severely reprimanding the prison officials, ordered that I be immediately conveyed to the department for politicals.

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SOUTH AMERICAN TRADE.

WHAT THE DELEGATES TO THE GREAT CONFERENCE THINK.

The Spanish-American Conference Are Developing Fast, but Their Trade Goes to Europe—English, French, German and Dutch Investments There.

(Special Correspondence.)

WASHINGTON, Oct. 10.—As I mingled last week with the delegates from South and Central America who were in the city attending the American congress, heard them talk of their countries and industries, and noted that almost without exception they were men of superior education and attainments, the lesson was brought home to me, as I dare say it was to many others, that it is the height of conceit for us to call ourselves, as we do, "the Americans." There are other great countries and peoples on this continent. We are not the only Americans.

The United States has less than one-half the population of the western hemisphere, and by no means all of the culture, progress, literature, art and material resources. We would cultivate the acquaintance of our neighbors to the south, who are just now blossoming and blooming both industrially and politically. The delegates from these southern countries are now seeing what we somewhat narrowly term America. They are visiting our cities and towns, our manufacturing establishments and our farms. Doubtless they will see much and be greatly interested, but with some curiosity concerning the commerce and industry of their own countries I made inquiry of one of the most intelligent of the delegates from South America, one who has traveled from Patagonia to British America.

"This is a great country, a great country," said he, "but we have some great countries, and we are just now blossoming and blooming both industrially and politically. The delegates from these southern countries are now seeing what we somewhat narrowly term America. They are visiting our cities and towns, our manufacturing establishments and our farms. Doubtless they will see much and be greatly interested, but with some curiosity concerning the commerce and industry of their own countries I made inquiry of one of the most intelligent of the delegates from South America, one who has traveled from Patagonia to British America.

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now a promising market for American trotters. The Argentine gentlemen who have paid from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per animal for the refuse of New York auction stables are now pretty careful what they buy.

"A singular fact with reference to the recent great boom in building, railways and manufactures in the Argentine Republic is that practically all of the lumber and timber used there has been brought from the United States. While there are large forests of soft woods in the country, they are so remote from the rivers and the coast that it has been found cheaper to import from North American ports. Buenos Ayres has a splendid harbor, which is constantly crowded with shipping from all parts of the world. I say all parts. Perhaps I had better except the United States. Though a large number of sailing vessels from American ports arrive at Buenos Ayres each year, but a small number of them fly the flag of the United States. Among hundreds of steamers in that port I have again and again looked in vain for the flag of your country. While part of the Argentine Republic with the United States is growing rapidly, I believe there are not more than one hundred Americans in the whole republic. There are thousands of Englishmen, Frenchmen and Italians.

"Every time I sit down to dinner here and drink a cup of coffee I think of the fact that you are the greater coffee-consuming country in the world, while the Central and South American countries represented in this congress are the coffee growers for the whole universe. Therefore if we should ever the coffee reach a better understanding of our reciprocal trade relations, it would be most fitting. I am told that the people of the United States consume more coffee each year than Germany, Great Britain, Austria and France combined. Four-fifths of your requirements are produced in Brazil and Venezuela, and nearly all of the remaining fifth, in Guatemala, Mexico, San Salvador, Colombia, Costa Rica and Hayti. Brazil alone supplies one-half of what is regarded as the average annual coffee crop of the world. The United States consumes more coffee each year than Germany, Great Britain, Austria and France combined. 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